

NEUTRAL STAND MAY PRECIPITATE A WAR

Conflict in Far East Not Unlikely If America Keeps Aloof.

ENQUIRIES MADE OF GERMANY

That Nation and the United States in Same Position.

VIEWS HELD IN WASHINGTON

Believed That Announcements of Great Britain and Russia Are Greatest Guarantee of Peace—Avoidance of Entangling Alliances.

LONDON, March 23.—It is necessary to say two things in regard to the political crisis through which the world is passing at the present moment. The first is that it is impossible to obtain substantiation of the gravest rumors which are now current, and the second that the responsibility for keeping the peace of the world may be thrown entirely upon the American and German Governments.

Followed by Negotiations. It is not necessary to discuss in detail the most alarming reports which have gained circulation, save to say that they do not receive credence in this or any European capital. This much is true: The Russo-French declaration regarding the Anglo-Japanese alliance has been followed or accompanied by important negotiations.

France and Russia have asked the other Powers, including the United States, Germany, Austria, and Italy, what would be their respective attitudes toward the new alliance. The inquiry, in at least two cases, included the question whether neutrality would be maintained in case of war between Great Britain and Japan on the one hand and France and Russia on the other.

War Might Have Followed.

It has been inferred in certain quarters that if assurances of neutrality had been obtained from the United States and Germany, war would have followed almost immediately. This inference is not, perhaps, absurd, but nothing in the nature of confirmation can be obtained from the best informed authorities. On the other hand, the British Foreign Office, which is fully aware of these international enquiries, utterly discredits any belittling enquiry.

It is pointed out that it is the diplomatic custom to exchange notes between Governments regarding the interpretation and effect of any important treaty. There cannot be any doubt that Russia, Germany, and France would be exceedingly pleased to obtain pledges of neutrality from America and Germany.

Refusals Probable.

The refusal of such a pledge by both countries would almost certainly prevent war. There is good reason to believe that Germany has already given such a refusal. In other words, the Kaiser insists that he will retain complete liberty of action. England is confident that the United States will take a similar attitude.

She does not expect America to come to her assistance, but she does believe that the Washington Government will do nothing to precipitate a conflict which might result in the destruction of American trade interests in the Far East.

Neutrality a Danger.

It is not going too far to say that a declaration at the present moment of American neutrality in case of war might precipitate that war. This must be fully understood by the Washington Government, hence the confidence here that no such declaration would be forthcoming.

Today's news from South Africa, which indicates that the Boers desire to negotiate for peace, has important bearings on the situation. If by any possibility Russia has belittled Germany, she will either bring them quickly into action before England can transfer her army from South Africa to India or she will abandon them entirely.

Letter for Alexieff.

A despatch to the "Morning Post" from Berlin says that Admiral Alexieff, commander-in-chief of the land and sea forces in Russian East Asia, has been granted leave of absence for several months. This is construed by some as proof that the situation in the Far East is regarded at St. Petersburg as being free of any likelihood of complications.

VIEWED IN WASHINGTON.

Guarantee of Peace Found in Announcements of Powers.

In spite of the surface indications that peace in China and the preservation of the territorial integrity of that great Empire seems assured through the alliance of Great Britain and Japan, and the joint declaration of Russia and France looking to the attainment of these ends, the diplomatic situation is regarded here with the greatest concern.

Occupying as it does a position of strict independence, the assurance of which cannot be doubted on account of its traditional policy of avoiding foreign alliances, the United States Government is better able than any other Power to observe the trend of events in the Far East and to determine without prejudice what may be the outcome of present conditions.

It has been energetic in obtaining information, and it is not going too far to say that the most recent advice from shadow a crisis which will be fraught with danger to the whole world.

Preparing to Meet Emergencies.

That Russia and France on the one hand and England and Japan on the other are preparing themselves to meet whatever may come is learned on authority so high and so thoroughly trustworthy that it cannot be susceptible of doubt. Instead of clearing the situation, the announcement of the English-Japanese alliance and the joint declaration of Russia and France have only served to increase the tension and make more uncertain the future of China, and for that matter the future of the great nations concerned.

When this Government was informed that England and Japan had entered into a coalition to preserve the integrity of the Chinese Empire the impression created on the minds of those concerned in the making of American policy was that it marked a distinct advance in the interest of peace between the Powers.

Situation in the Far East Complicated.

The situation in the Far East continues to become more complicated. It is now admitted that if Russia and France were sure the United States would remain neutral war would have already taken place.

The attitude of Germany is also a matter of interest. The stand of these Powers may rule the entire Eastern situation.

In Washington it is believed that the greatest guarantee of peace is found in the announcements made by the Powers concerned.

A Crisis Approaching. Since then, however, the feeling here is not so optimistic. Additional information and the opportunity to study the terms in which the Russo-French note was couched have brought to the Government a realization that the crisis is approaching and that something else must be done to clear away the dangerous clouds that have again begun to gather on the international horizon.

As a measure, the Government of the United States is an important factor in this great world game. Russia, or France, or England, or Japan has not made any official overtures to this Government to secure a definition of the position it will occupy should war come in which the one or both of the Powers first named would be arrayed against one or both of the others.

The attitude of the United States is too well understood to permit any of these nations to risk an almost certain discouraging answer from Washington, with the consequent moral effect it would probably have. But it is understood here that the Governments at St. Petersburg and Paris are exceedingly anxious to ascertain what may be expected from the United States if they should become involved in war with other nations over China.

No Expression of Opinion Asked. In furnishing copies of their joint declaration to the Secretary of State neither Russia nor France asked for any expression of opinion in regard to that momentous communication. It was learned yesterday that an identical answer had been, however, separately made to the Russian and French Ambassadors, in which Secretary Hay expressed the gratification of the United States Government at the statement of the two Powers that they are desirous of maintaining peace and the territorial integrity of China, with an acknowledgment of the principle of the open door, objects for which, it is stated, the United States Government has been striving since the beginning of the troubles in China.

This acknowledgment must be regarded as expressing an understanding on the part of President Roosevelt and Secretary Hay that they regard Russia and France as having pledged themselves to uphold the policy to which the American Government has consistently adhered since the transmission to the Powers of Mr. Hay's notable communication of July 3, 1900.

But, according to the view taken here in the best-informed and most influential official quarters, pledges on paper go for nothing when a vital issue between nations is at stake, and when the opportunity is presented for carrying out long-cherished designs and where other issues are involved that have given rise to feeling that must find vent.

A Guarantee of Peace.

In the minds of men here whose opinions are worthy of consideration, the greatest assurance of continued peace lies in the fact that all the parties concerned know that the others are making preparations to meet whatever may come. The effect of a sudden hostile movement would therefore be null.

Russia does not know to what extent she may have to reckon with England if the forces of the East and the Mikado combine to attack her. Japan, likewise, is probably uncertain as to the extent of the help England may give her if that contingency occurs. On the other hand, there may be no certainty that Russia would go to the extent of joining Russia in a war.

Still another element of uncertainty lies in the position of the United States and Germany. None of the European Powers has reason to feel assured that this Government will not go to extremes to maintain the principles with regard to China for which it has used its best diplomatic endeavors.

It is admitted here that a possible source of danger to continued peace between the Powers lies in the present uprising in Southern China.

The declaration of Russia and France contains a paragraph which has been construed by some quarters as a tacit interference on their part in just such a state of affairs. In the language of that paragraph:

"They (Russia and France) are compelled, however, not to ignore from view the possibly imminent action of other Powers in a repetition of disorders in China, possibly impairing China's integrity and free development to the detriment of their reciprocal interests. They therefore reserve to themselves the right to take measures to defend these interests."

Nobody here is in a position to predict with any degree of certainty what Germany's attitude would be should any of the other Powers or a combination of Powers attempt to seize and hold Chinese territory. Germany is the only nation that maintains a large force of troops in the territory which she is fighting ground in the Peking campaign of 1900.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Peking, backed by their Governments, have endeavored to have her withdraw this force, but without success, and the matter is still being set forth in the newspapers. It also involved the position of Italy and Austria, who have followed her lead in the Chinese negotiations.

AMEER'S RUSSIAN LEANINGS.

Afghanistan Potentate Said to Have Shown Decided Preference.

LONDON, March 24.—A despatch to the "Daily Mail" from St. Petersburg says there is good ground for believing that the Amir of Afghanistan has recently shown a leaning toward Russia, which may have important results in the future.

TROOPS SENT TO FRONTIER.

Russia Strengthening Posts, Ostensibly to Prevent Smuggling.

LONDON, March 24.—A despatch to the "Standard" from Berlin says that Russia is about to strengthen all her military posts on the Russo-Chinese frontier, ostensibly to prevent smuggling. Customs officers are to be stationed along the whole frontier.

The real purpose is suspected to be a very considerable increase in the Russian garrisons, especially mounted infantry, in order to be ready to cross the frontier when the time is considered opportune.

PEACEFUL VIEW IN JAPAN.

Franco-Russian Alliance Recognized as a Territorial Understanding.

YOKOHAMA, March 23.—A portion of the press does not see anything serious in the Franco-Russian declaration. The "Jiji," a leading journal, however, considers the primary object of the Anglo-Japanese alliance in the development of commerce, and consequently the United States sympathizes with it.

On the other hand, the "Jiji" maintains that the purpose of the Franco-Russian understanding must be territorial. France seeking territory in Yunnan, and Russia in Manchuria. Germany is in neither camp, as her European policy requires her to stand neutral between Russia and Great Britain.

All the journals agree in the declaration being an additional guarantee for the maintenance of tranquillity in the Far East.

SEES A THIRD GROUP.

Belgian Paper Views Germany and America as Allies.

BRUSSELS, March 24.—The "Independence Belge" reviewing the situation in the Far East, concludes that probably Germany and the United States will constitute a third group of allies, the formation of which does not in itself constitute a menace to the peace of the world, but the fact cannot be overlooked that the policy of counterpoise to the Anglo-Japanese alliance may not yield the happy results that optimists affect to anticipate.

MAY BE CIVIL SERVICE CHIEF.

Son of Late President Garfield Tendered an Important Berth.

Mr. James R. Garfield, of Cleveland, Ohio, to whom President Roosevelt recently offered the position of Civil Service Commissioner, was in Washington on Saturday, and had a long conference with the President regarding the place. He left for Cleveland at night, and it could not be learned whether he had arrived at a decision regarding it. He is the son of the late President Garfield.

It is generally believed that he will accept the place. It was offered him soon after Mr. Garfield's death, but he declined to accept it. This time, however, the position seems to have been permanently broken.

The return to the fold of the three Anne Arundel delegates to the House Democratic caucus was a matter of some interest. It was the result of a vote of the caucus, which was held on Saturday night, when he was elected to the position of the caucus. The caucus was held on Saturday night, when he was elected to the position of the caucus.

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BUSY TIME AHEAD FOR MARYLAND SOLONS

Close of Legislative Session in Sight at Annapolis.

Believed That Baltimore's Pet Measure Is Safe—Democrats Whip Anne Arundel Insurgents Into Line—Mr. Straus Now Out in the Cold.

(Special to The Washington Times.) ANNAPOLIS, Md., March 23.—The legislative week which has just passed at the capital of Maryland has been signalled by two important events. The Legislature is again in control of the Democratic party, although the strikers' leaders are not yet in a position to dictate.

Circumstances have shaped themselves in such a way that there appears to be at least a possibility that the Legislature will take the necessary step toward the construction of the \$12,000,000 sewerage system for Baltimore City, and that the act which provides for the submission of an ordinance to that effect to the qualified voters of Baltimore may pass during the last days which remain to the session of 1902.

The first break in the forces of the coalition in the House of Delegates, which had so effectively blocked Democratic plans during the larger part of the session by throwing the balance of power in the House to the Republicans, occurred on Tuesday evening.

Mr. Straus Tried Too Much. The occasion was the attempt of Mr. Straus to push through a resolution to appoint a committee to investigate the State Normal School. This measure was vigorously fought by the Democrats, and the Anne Arundel delegates, who had already helped Mr. Straus embarrass the State leaders voted with their party associates. The resolution was only carried by a majority of one, and would have been defeated except for absences on the part of Democratic side.

The next day Mr. Straus made a fatal mistake. He attempted to align his forces again and selected as the test a local bill from Montgomery county, which had already passed the Senate and in which there was no politics whatever.

He attempted its defeat, however, merely as a test of his power. He sadly missed his object, for on this matter the two Anne Arundel counties were joined by a third, leaving only one with Mr. Straus. In addition to this three Republicans disapproved of Straus' misdirected effort and voted with the Democratic side. Thus the time seems to have been permanently broken.

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MARCONI'S NARROW ESCAPE.

Hit by Stone That Came Through Car Window.

HALIFAX, N. S., March 23.—William Marconi will leave Sydney for New York on Tuesday. He has finally decided on Table Head, fifteen miles from Sydney, as the location for his Cape Breton station. He had an escape from being seriously injured on Saturday night. While his speech was making his way to a large stone came through the window of his car, nearly striking him. The escape from being badly hurt was very narrow. The required for the station has been given to the Marconi Company gratis by the Dominion Coal Company.

GEN. WOOD MENTIONED TO COMMAND OUR ARMY

Rumor Has Him Slated for Miles' Position.

President Said to Be Favorable—Has High Opinion of His Ability—Storm May Be Brewing.

While General Wood's visit to Washington at this time is for the purpose of determining the plan by which this Government shall withdraw from Cuba, there are many and various rumors to the effect that President Roosevelt desires to make him the General Commanding the Army in the event of the retirement of General Miles.

These rumors meet with no confirmation, but most significant is a statement which is said to have been made by the President to a prominent visitor at the White House. This was in effect that Mr. Roosevelt declared that there is but one man fitted to command the United States Army, and that is General Wood.

That President Roosevelt has the highest opinion of the ability of General Wood is well known, but there are many who doubt if he made the statement credited to him to any of his callers.

His effect upon the officers of the army who have served for years, and who are perhaps a trifle jealous of General Wood's rapid rise since the beginning of the Spanish-American war, when he was colonel of the Rough Riders, with Roosevelt as his lieutenant colonel, would be a matter of some importance to the Administration.

Furthermore, in the event of the passage of the Root bill, which was the one which the President had in mind, and which prompted him to say he would retire if it became law, the office of Lieutenant General Commanding the Army will be abolished, and the power that position diffused throughout a general staff.

In such case it would not be surprising if General Wood should fare well in the shifting of positions.

able to talk, and they gave their versions of the wreck to a representative of The Times. Lying on a cot, in a ward on the third floor of the hospital, Mr. Shindell said:

"This is the second time I have had a narrow escape from death within the past week. Last Thursday night I was in a wreck on the Atlantic Coast Line, in the far South. No one was hurt, although the locomotive of the train jumped the track while going at a high rate of speed."

"The wreck at Coveville was most serious, although I am told the loss of life was small. A good many persons were injured. Nearly all the postal clerks on the wrecked limited were more or less seriously injured."

"I think the train was going forty-five miles an hour when we struck the land-slides. It was an hour before daylight. Most of our work was up, and we were talking several of us, when there came a crash that was appalling. I was pitched out of the mail car, seemingly head foremost, and was pinned beneath a great pile of wreckage before I had realized what had happened. It was a miracle that I escaped being killed. In the wreckage some of the other clerks and the crew were rolling about when I recovered my consciousness. Powers, which were for a moment fairly carried away by the force of the collision with the bank of earth was tremendous."

"In some moments I got out of the debris unaided, and I went to help other persons less fortunate. I secured treatment two hours later for the wounds on my head."

"I shall be all right in a day or two." Shindell has been in the railway mail car for eighteen months. He is married and has no children. He is comparatively a young man, and of a pleasing address and appearance.

Edward Loving, who occupied a cot next to that of Shindell, has been in the railway mail service four years. His wife and one child reside in this city, where Loving has his home.

No Warning of Crash. The story of the wreck of the limited as told by Loving is dramatic. He said: "There was no warning of the crash, which we encountered just before daylight. It came like a flash of lightning and was over almost as quickly. First added to the horror of the wreck. Hardly had the engine and the coaches and the mail cars been piled upon one another before flames broke out, apparently ignited from the locomotive. For a time all was confusion. At the first shock passengers fled in their night clothes from the wrecked coaches. In the darkness all was confusion, and one could scarcely recognize a person at his side."

Loving will probably be able to go to his home tomorrow. He is anxious to leave the hospital.

Robinson S. Walters was in charge of the clock clerk on the wrecked limited. He has been ten years in the service. His condition is such that he will have to remain at the hospital for several days, and perhaps longer.

Up to a late hour last night Little had been learned of the relatives or friends of the negro porter, whose home is in this city. It is probable his remains will be brought here today for burial. Low was assigned to duty on the Pullman car Cryse.

With other clock clerk Chatterbox limited, known as train 40, which follows the Southwestern limited to this city from Lynchburg, Va., where it leaves the West-Prichett was one of the wealthiest men of this section. He was an extensive land owner and tobaccoist. The coroner's verdict exonerated Belew.

One Man Dead, the Other Has Mortal Injury. HENDERSON, Ky., March 23.—Green W. Pritchett, a wealthy citizen, was instantly killed, and John Belew, a prominent farmer, was fatally wounded in a street duel this morning at Corydon, this county. Bad blood existed between the two men over a business transaction, and when they met on the street of the village Pritchett drew a revolver and shot Belew in the mouth and arm.

Belew drew a pistol and shot Pritchett in the head and through the heart. With a bullet through his heart, Pritchett fired a third shot at Belew, but missed. Pritchett then fell to the ground and expired. Pritchett was one of the wealthiest men of this section. He was an extensive land owner and tobaccoist. The coroner's verdict exonerated Belew.

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